THE SWEET SIXTEEN – EARLIEST PENNSYLVANIA POST OFFICES

SYNOPSIS

PHILADELPHIA WAS THE NATION'S CAPITAL DURING THE REVOLUTION, EXCEPT WHEN THE BRITISH THREAT CAUSED THE CAPITAL TO BE MOVED, RESPECTIVELY, TO BALTIMORE, LANCASTER, AND YORK. WHILE CONGRESS WAS SITTING IN YORK (OCTOBER 1777 - JUNE 1778), IT APPROVED THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. AFTER THE WAR, THE CAPITAL WAS MOVED TO NEW YORK, BUT FROM 1790 UNTIL THE OPENING OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA IN 1800, PHILADELPHIA WAS AGAIN THE CAPITAL. IN 1787, THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION MET IN PHILADELPHIA.

AFTER THE BOSTON RIOTS IN SEPTEMBER 1774, THE COLONIES BEGAN TO SEPARATE FROM THE MOTHER COUNTRY. A CONTINENTAL CONGRESS WAS ORGANIZED AT PHILADELPHIA IN MAY 1775 TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT. ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS BEFORE THE DELEGATES WAS HOW TO CONVEY AND DELIVER THE MAIL. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WAS APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF A COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION TO ESTABLISH A POSTAL SYSTEM. THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS ON JULY 25 & 26 CONSIDERED THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A POSTMASTER GENERAL FOR THE 13 AMERICAN COLONIES. ON JULY 26, 1775, FRANKLIN WAS APPOINTED POSTMASTER GENERAL, THE FIRST APPOINTMENT UNDER THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

ON JULY 26, 1775, MEMBERS OF THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA, AGREED "THAT A POSTMASTER GENERAL BE APPOINTED FOR THE UNITED STATES, WHO SHALL HOLD HIS OFFICE AT PHILADELPHIA, AND SHALL BE ALLOWED A SALARY OF 1,000 DOLLARS PER ANNUM."

FRANKLIN SERVED UNTIL NOVEMBER 7, 1776. ARTICLE IX OF THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, RATIFIED IN 1781, GAVE CONGRESS "THE SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE RIGHT AND POWER . . . ESTABLISHING AND REGULATING POST OFFICES FROM ONE STATE TO ANOTHER . . . AND EXACTING SUCH POSTAGE ON PAPERS PASSING THROUGH THE SAME AS MAY BE REQUISITE TO DEFRAY THE EXPENSES OF THE SAID OFFICE . . .. " THE FIRST 3 POSTMASTERS GENERAL-BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, RICHARD BACHE, AND EBENEZER HAZARD-WERE APPOINTED BY, AND REPORTED TO, CONGRESS.

THIS EXHIBIT PRESENTS AN HISTORICAL REVIEW /HONORING OF THE 16 EARLIEST PENNSYLVANIA POST OFFICES TO UNDERSCORE THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT IN PA OF THE POSTAL SYSTEM - BRIEFLY OUTLINED ABOVE.

Highlights include:

COVERS POSTED PRIOR/POST 1799
FRANKLIN'S MARK & EARLIER THAN PREVIOUSLY LISTED COVERS
VARIED RATES & TOWN POSTMARKS
INTERESTING INTER-STATE/INTRASTATE DESTINATIONS
DIFFICULTY OF ACQUISITION COVERS
CARLISLE PA COLONIAL PERIOD COVER
VARIETY OF POSTAL COLOR MARKINGS
SELDOM SEEN DOTTED LINE POSTMARKS
SELECTION OF MANUSCRIPT MARKINGS
TIN HAT HARRISBURG POSTMARK
BLUE OVAL POSTMARKS
WAR RATE USAGE
FREE FRANKING EXAMPLE

THE EXHIBIT ORDER IS CHRONOLOGICAL BASED ON EACH POST OFFICE'S OPENING.
THE LOCATION OF THE TOWN IS PROVIDED FOR HISTORICAL REFERENCE.
POPULATION OF TOWN NEAR TIME OF THE COVER IS TO PROVIDE AN ORDER OF MAGNITUDE